

3 FAH-2 H-400

APPENDIX B INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING INTERAGENCY FOREIGN SERVICE NATIONAL POSITION DESCRIPTION

(TL:FSNH-4; 8-3-93)

I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

A separate position description will be prepared for each position filled by a Foreign Service national; however, when the Personnel Office determines that a position is identical to another position which has already been described, Item 14 may be limited to "This position is identical to Position No. _____," and Items 15 and 16 may be omitted.

The Personnel Officer will determine who shall complete each item of the Interagency Foreign Service National Position Description (Form OF-298), but it is suggested that the Personnel Office complete Items 1, 2, 3, 5a, and 12, and that the organization initiating the position description complete Items 4, 5c, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 14. In the interest of attaining consistent treatment of qualifications requirements and of obtaining and recording position element information in a manner that will most facilitate accurate classification of positions, it is further suggested that the Personnel Office prepare Items 15 and 16 in consultation with the initiating office.

Position descriptions (OF-298) should be as brief as is consistent with providing the information needed for accurate classification, definite, and clearly understandable. Only the major duties and responsibilities should be described. Duties that are performed for only a very small part of the total working time, or only on rare occasions, and those that have not been performed for a year or more should not ordinarily be included in a description. Such duties should be discussed with the supervisor before the description is written.

II. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. Post

Enter city and country in which post is located.

2. Agency

Enter name of employing Department or Agency, e.g., State, AID, etc.

3. Position No.

Enter number assigned to position.

4. Reason for Submission

If the position description has been submitted because of a change in the duties and responsibilities of an existing position, enter the position number, title and grade of the position replaced in a. If the position description has been submitted for reasons other than the above, briefly indicate the reason in b., e.g., new position, etc.

5. Classification Action

- a. Allocation By: Enter the title of the person authorized to take classification action, i.e., U.S. Embassy Personnel Officer, U.S.Embassy Administrative Officer.
- Class Title of Position: Enter official class title determined to be appropriate for the position by use of the Interagency Foreign Service National Position Classification Standards.
 - Grade: Enter grade determined to be appropriate for the position by use of the Interagency Foreign Service National Position Classification Standards.
 - Initials: The official authorized to take classification action will personally initial this block.
 - Date: The date on which the classification action was taken will be entered in this block.
- b. Other: This block is reserved for use by classification authorities other than those located at the post, i.e., PER/FSN, the Washington Appeals Board, and appropriate headquarters offices of employing agencies.
- c. Recommended by Initiating Office: The initiating office may indicate its recommendation as to class title and grade in these blocks if it wishes to do so, but a recommendation is not a requirement. Some American supervisors may prefer not to make recommendations as a matter of

policy. All recommendations will be initialed by the American supervisor.

6. Post Title of Position

Official titles (usually functional), as prescribed by Interagency Foreign Service National Position Classification Standards, will be used in classifying positions, in staffing patterns, and in all reports, but informal or organizational titles may be used within the employing organization at post option. If such a title is to be used, it will be entered in this block.

7. Name of Employee

Enter the full name of the employee assigned to this position (incumbent).

8. Mission or Office

Enter the name of the mission or office, e.g., U.S. Embassy, Office of the Defense Attaché, etc.

- a. through e. First through Fifth Subdivisions: Using as many boxes as necessary, show the organizational structure in which the position is placed, listing subdivisions in descending order, e.g., Administrative Section, General Services Branch, Transportation Unit, Garage.

9. Signature of Employee

Following review of the position description, the incumbent will sign and date this block. If not satisfied the description accurately describes the major duties and responsibilities of the position, the incumbent will discuss the position with the immediate supervisor and, as appropriate, with the American supervisor. Employees should understand that management's obligation to prescribe the duties and responsibilities of a position and the incumbent's perception of the position may result in somewhat different viewpoints as to duties and responsibilities.

10. Signature of Foreign Service National Supervisor

The FSN supervisor of the position, if there is one, will review the position description, and if satisfied as to its accuracy, will sign and date this block. If he or she does not consider the description to be complete and accurate, the inadequacies will be discussed with the incumbent or the American supervisor, as appropriate.

11. Signature of American Supervisor

The American supervisor shall personally review the position description and, when satisfied as to its completeness and accuracy, and that there is a valid management need for the position, shall sign and date the certification contained in this box.

12. Certification of the Personnel Officer

When satisfied that the position description is complete and accurate, and that the position has been properly classified in accordance with the appropriate Interagency Foreign Service National Position Classification Standards, the Personnel Officer or other American official responsible for the personnel function shall sign and date the certification contained in this box.

13. Basic Function of Position

See following section.

14. Major Duties and Responsibilities

There are two phases of preparing a statement of the duties and responsibilities of a position: fact gathering and writing.

- (1) **Fact Gathering:** Before attempting to describe the duties and responsibilities of a position, the writer should assemble all pertinent facts about it. This should begin with a review of organization charts, functional statements, agency and local instructions and procedures relating to the work of the position, and any other background information that is available. Next, the writer, if other than the incumbent of the position, should interview the incumbent. Preferably this should be done at the work site in order that the writer may observe the work area, forms and equipment used, the work process, and other pertinent factors related to the work, as well as asking questions about duties and responsibilities. The position facts thus obtained should be discussed with the FSN supervisor, if there is one, and with the American supervisor, to ensure the position is functioning as contemplated by management. If the incumbent of the position is the writer, that person should determine and list the major duties and responsibilities of the position, and discuss the list with the supervisor to ensure that the incumbent's understanding of the position is in accordance with management's intentions.
- (2) **Writing and Description:** When the writer and the supervisor of the position are satisfied that all of the significant position facts have

been assembled, the writer is ready to begin organizing and writing the statement of duties and responsibilities.

- (a) First, review the position facts and make up a list of the major kinds of work performed. Examine the items on the list to see if they are all different from one another, or if some of them are generally concerned with the same things. Determine if any of the latter can be combined. When the writer feels he or she has a logical list of the major kinds of work, the items should be arranged in a manner that will provide a clear picture of the position. Usually this will be in order of importance or in order of performance.
- (b) Next, expand the list into an outline, listing under each item such details as pertain to that heading. Review the outline and make any changes that will increase understanding of the position.
- (c) The writer is now almost ready to begin writing the statement of major duties and responsibilities, but first, one or two sentences indicating the overall purpose and organizational location of the position should be written, e.g., "Serves as the embassy's sole telephone switchboard operator, with responsibility for receiving and placing all local and long distance telephone calls, and for providing authorized information to callers." Record this statement under Item 13, "Basic Function of Position."
- (d) Next, the writer should enter the first heading of his outline under Item 14, "Major Duties and Responsibilities," make it A or 1, and indicate in the right hand column the approximate percentage of time devoted to the work described under that heading. In estimating percentages of time, it may be helpful to remember that, where the work is forty hours, five percent would be two hours a week. A brief description of the work covered by the first heading should be written. The next heading on the outline should be entered, marked B or 2, the percentage of time devoted to that work recorded, and a brief description of the work covered by that heading written. Continue in this fashion until all headings in the outline have been described. The description should then be reviewed to ensure that all major duties and responsibilities have been covered, that the percentages add up to one hundred percent, and that the following guidance has been followed:
- (e) Is the description clear? Does it avoid vague terms, e.g.,

“handle,” “check,” “assist,” etc.?

- (f) Does it indicate what is done, how it is done, and why it is done? Is it understandable to someone who does not work in the employing organization?
- (g) Is it factual? Descriptions should accurately describe the actual duties and responsibilities of the position. They should not be copied from other descriptions or classification standards. The Personnel Office will return descriptions which are partly or wholly copied from Interagency Foreign Service National Position Classification Standards, or from other position descriptions.

15. Desired Qualifications

Some position qualifications are requirements, e.g., a professional engineer must have a collegiate degree in engineering, a chauffeur must hold a local driver's license, etc., but general educational and work experience qualifications for a position may often be stated in terms of desired qualifications. Although the following instructions are written in terms of qualifications requirements, qualifications for specific positions may be written in terms of both required and desired qualifications. It is suggested that where it is considered necessary to make the achievement of a certain level of qualification mandatory for appointment, the word “is required” be used, e.g., “a collegiate degree is required,” and that where a certain level of qualification is desired rather than required, the words “is desirable” be used, e.g., “some collegiate education is desirable.”

- (a) **Education:** Indicate the minimum level of education and specialized training required for performance of the duties of the position. Educational requirements should never be determined on the basis of the educational attainments of the present incumbent. The following table may be used as a general guide to appropriate educational qualification requirements for different kinds of work.

Kind of Work	Normal Educational Requirement
Lower level clerical and manual	Completion of elementary school; specialized or vocational training needed for some positions
Journeyman mechanic & supervisory manual	Completion of elementary school; plus apprenticeship or vocational training in a specific trade
Upper level clerical & supervisory clerical	Completion of secondary school; specialized training needed for certain positions
Subprofessional, technical, & managerial	Completion of secondary school; specialized training needed for some positions; some collegiate education is desirable in certain positions
Professional and top level management	Possession of a collegiate degree, often in a specific discipline

- b. **Prior Work Experience:** Indicate the minimum amount and specific nature of prior work experience required for performance of the duties of the position. Prior work experience requirements should be determined only on the basis of minimum amount of experience required to perform the work successfully, and never on the basis of the amount of experience which the present incumbent of the position has. The following table may be used as a general guide to appropriate prior work experience requirements for different kinds of work.

Kind of Work	Normal Prior Work Experience
Lower level clerical and manual	None to one year of related experience
Upper level clerical including supervisory	Depending upon level, from one year of related experience to two or three years of closely related experiences
Journeyman mechanic & supervisory manual	Depending upon level, from one to three years of experience in a specific trade
Subprofessional, technical, &	One to five years of progressively

managerial	responsible experience, depending on level
Professional and top level management	Four to eight years of progressively responsible experience, depending upon level

- c. **Post Entry Training:** Indicate any requirement for completion of organized and formalized training, such as the correspondence courses in Nationality Law and Consular Practice, completion of which is required for advancement to certain levels in Consular work. On-the-job training requirements should not be noted in this space, unless the training is conducted in an organized manner, with reading assignments, lectures, examinations, and the award of certificate of completion.
- d. **Language Proficiency:** This item is intended to indicate the degree of proficiency in a language or languages other than that of the host country required for performance of the duties of the position. In most situations, this means proficiency in English, but in a few cases other languages are also involved. Record requirements for proficiency in English in terms of the levels indicated in 3 FAH-2 H-400 Appendix C "Language Qualification Requirement," e.g., "Level 3 English ability is required (good working knowledge)." Record other language requirements in the same manner, using the same level approach. Language proficiency requirements will be based on the requirements of the position, never on the abilities of the incumbent.
- e. **Knowledge:** Indicate briefly the minimum knowledge required to perform the duties of the position satisfactorily. Specific knowledges may include knowledge of agency and local instructions and procedures, manuals, catalogues, etc., which are applicable to the position, and accepted and established practices in a particular trade or profession, and social, business, political, and diplomatic customs.
- f. **Abilities and Skills:** This item is intended to record abilities and skills required for successful performance of the duties of the position. Examples include ability to drive a motor vehicle as evidenced by possession of a driver's license, typing and stenographic skills (record in terms of the levels indicated in 3 FAH-2 H-400 Appendix D , "Qualification Requirements for Typing and Stenography"), ability to operate various kinds of

equipment and machinery, and ability to perform a specific kind of professional or subprofessional work, as evidenced by possession of an appropriate license or certificate, e.g., Registered Nurse Certificate.

16. Position Elements

This section is intended to bring out certain position facts in such a manner as will make them most useful for the purpose of determining the proper classification of the position. Long and detailed statements are not desired; short and succinct comments are of the most value.

- (a) **Supervision Received:** Indicate the name, title, and position number of the immediate supervisor. State how supervisory control is exercised, e.g., how assignments are made, what instructions on how to perform the work are given, whether the supervisor sets priorities and fixes deadlines, the extent to which supervisor reviews completed work, and the extent to which supervisor provides guidance, etc.
- (b) **Available Guidelines:** Indicate what guidelines are available to assist the employee in performing the duties of the position, e.g., instructions and procedures, check lists, manuals, established office, trade, or occupational practices, etc., and the extent to which these guidelines are directly applicable or must be interpreted in their application to specific situations.
- (c) **Exercise of Judgement:** Indicate the extent to which the incumbent of the position must exercise judgment in performing the duties of the position. Cite specific examples.
- (d) **Authority to Make Commitments:** Indicate the extent to which the incumbent of the position is authorized to make commitments which bind the organizational unit or a higher level authority, to a course of action. Cite specific examples.
- (e) **Nature, Level, and Purpose of Contacts:** This item is intended to pinpoint the specific nature and purpose of contacts with persons not in the supervisory chain, and the level of persons contacted. Indicate the types and levels of persons contacted, the reasons for the contacts, what types of information is exchanged, and how often contacts are made.
- (f) **Supervision Exercised:** Indicate the number, kinds, and

levels of employees supervised, and the nature of supervisory control exercised, e.g., making assignments, providing instructions as to how to perform the work, providing guidance on problems, reviewing completed work, etc.

- (g) Time Requirement to Perform Full Range of Duties Indicate the approximate amount of time required for a fully qualified person without previous experience in the organizational unit to perform the full range of duties of the position, e.g., two weeks, six months, etc.

3 FAH-2 H-400 APPENDIX B

EXHIBIT INTERAGENCY FOREIGN SERVICE NATIONAL POSITION DESCRIPTION, OF-298

INTERAGENCY FOREIGN SERVICE NATIONAL POSITION DESIGNATION				
Prepare according to instructions given in Foreign Service National Handbook, Chapter 3 FAH-2 H-400				
1. POST	2. AGENCY	3. POSITION NO.		
4. REASON FOR SUBMISSION <input type="checkbox"/> a. Reclassification: This position replaces Position(s) No. _____ , _____ (Title), _____ (Series) _____ (Grade) <input type="checkbox"/> No. _____ , _____ (Title), _____ (Series) _____ (Grade) <input type="checkbox"/> b. New Position c. Other (explain).				
5. CLASSIFICATION ACTION	Position Title and Series Code	Grade	Initials	Date
a. Post Classification Authority				
b. Other				
c. Recommended by Initiating Office				
6. POST TITLE OF POSITION (if any)		7. NAME OF EMPLOYEE		
8. MISSION OR OFFICE		c. Third Subdivision		
a. First Subdivision		d. Fourth Subdivision		
b. Second Subdivision		e. Fifth Subdivision		
9. This is a complete and accurate description of the duties and responsibilities of my position.		10. This is a complete and accurate description of the duties and responsibilities of this position		
_____ Signature of Employee Date		_____ Signature of Local Supervisor Date		
11. This is a complete and accurate description of the duties and responsibilities of this position. There is a valid management need for this position.		12. I have satisfied myself that this is an accurate description of this position, and I certify that it has been classified in accordance with appropriate Foreign Service National Handbook, Chapter 3 FAH-2 H-400 standards.		

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<hr/> Signature of American Supervisor Date	<hr/> Signature of Administrative or Personnel Officer Date
13. BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION	
14. MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
% OF TIME	
(continue on blank sheet)	

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OPTIONAL FORM 298 (8-93)
DEPT. OF STATE

INTERAGENCY FOREIGN SERVICE NATIONAL POSITION DESCRIPTION, OF-298

15. DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- a. Education:
- b. Prior Work Experience:
- c. Post Entry Training
- d. Language Proficiency:
- e. Knowledges:
- f. Skills and Abilities:

16. POSITION ELEMENTS

- a. Supervision Received:
- b. Available Guidelines:
- c. Exercise of Judgement:
- d. Authority to Make Commitments:
- e. Nature, Level, and Purpose of Contacts:
- f. Supervision Exercised:
- g. Time Required to Perform Full Range of Duties after entry into the Position:

OPTIONAL FORM 298 (BACK)
(8-93)